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THE HOUSE

A NEW YORK LIBRARY.



THE room illustrated herewith is intended for a library. The low bookcases extend behind the desk, and occupy the corner next the window. They are not made the principal feature in the drawing, because it was desired to show the artistically contrived inglenook, with its arch supported on columns and pilasters, which is the most important part of the decoration, and, indeed, dominates everything else. Besides, it is not a

from which depend the flower-like globes, and from the centre of the arch over the fireplace hangs a branch of three unshaded bulbs, which light up the entire recess from above, while the glow of the fire throws a warm cross-light into the shadows. The lamps on the desk are also electric, as is shown by the conducting wire communicating with them from beneath it, and can be lit or extinguished in an instant by merely pressing a button.

The drawing is so clear that it is only necessary to point out a few matters which might not be noticed by the reader. The division of the ceiling in octagonal panels has permitted of a somewhat novel effect in the coving, which brings it down upon the walls. It is marked off at short intervals by ribs, which join the

bold variations. If copied, its color treatment should depend on the tone of the wood used for the wainscoting. With oak or ash, a dark cream color for the walls and ceiling, with a rather copious distribution of gilding on the upper surfaces, might be recommended. If the wainscot be of mahogany or other warm-toned wood, the walls may be a deep snuff color, and a pattern of brown and olive, russet and blue green may be used to break up their monotony.

ROGER RIORDAN.

A VERY pretty Moorish hall has been made in a city house at little expense, considering the beauty of the result. The space was originally a small open yard, or rather well, at the back of the house, entirely surrounded



A NEW YORK "LIBRARY," LIGHTED BY ELECTRICITY.

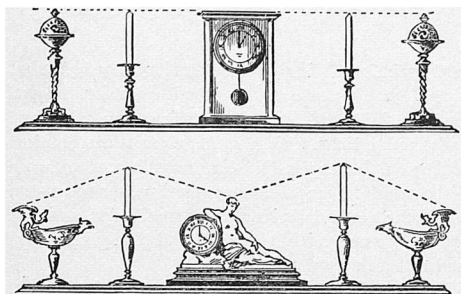
room merely to store books in; it is a room to lounge in comfortably while reading them. The aspect which it has been thought best to illustrate, then, is that which shows the cheerful place where one may idle over a book by the fire or the window, rather than the array of shelves and cases more or less common to all libraries. The desk away, the room might be used for any other purpose; and, *per contra*, it shows that any cheerful, well-lit room may be easily fitted for a book-room.

In the matter of lighting, it will be noticed at once that it is fitted up for electric lights. The graceful forms of which "electroliers" and their ground glass or opalescent shades are susceptible, have been taken advantage of. Along the cornice, which finishes the high wainscot, are arranged groups of slender curved stems,

lower mouldings of the outer row of the ceiling panels into spaces, alternately rectangular and pentagonal. These ribs appear to be continued below the moulding, which serves as cornice by short, bracket-like supports, which, from their position, arrange themselves in pairs. In the chimney recess, settles provided with cushions are fitted in on either side between the pilasters and columns that support the arch. Along the top of their high backs runs a shelf continuous with the mantelshelf, which, with the upper shelf of the mantel, provides room for the display of a small assortment of bric-à-brac, besides the customary clock and candle-branches. The space under the settees may be used as lockers for coal and wood. The style of the room may be said to be that of our Colonial period, but with some

by high walls. It was determined to put a staircase there communicating with both the front and rear buildings, and to put a glass roof over it. Then occurred the idea to give the two-storied gallery thus created somewhat of a Moorish character, and, as carried out, it has proved a great success. The gallery is borne on two rows of horse-shoe arches, the lower one of which has twin columns, the upper single shafts, but placed nearer together and not directly over the under supports. In this way the great height of the little hall is made less evident than if the upright lines of the columns were continuous. Screens of open wood-work placed between the upper columns make a breast-high balustrade to the gallery. In the corners are Turkish brackets, carved and painted, each supporting a tray or vase, or other piece of

Benares brass inlaid with silver. Niches in the walls hold pieces of glazed pottery. The dado and the frames of these niches and of the doors are of tiles, in a pattern of turquoise blue and dull purple. The floor is of squares of marble, red, white and black; and in the

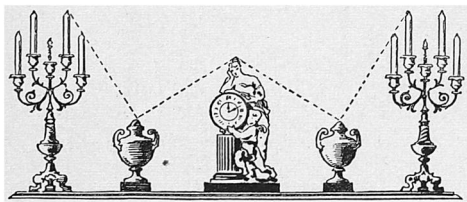


IMPROPER ARRANGEMENT OF OBJECTS.

centre, in place of the traditional fountain, is a large oleander shrub, surrounded by some smaller flowering plants.

THE MANAGEMENT OF LINES.

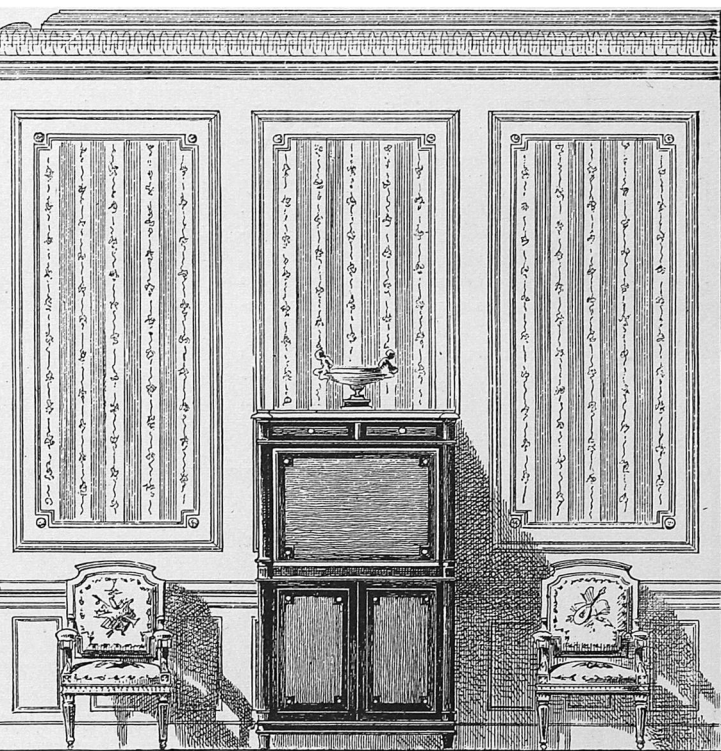
It may be said, to the honor and glory of our younger architects especially, that when they introduce color in the interior fitting of a house they almost always produce a tolerable result, sometimes even a very agreeable



AGREEABLE ARRANGEMENT OF OBJECTS.

one. This they do by attention to common-sense rules, by leaning to harmony of gradation rather than of contrast, utilizing the natural colors of materials wherever possible, preferring warm but broken tones of medium

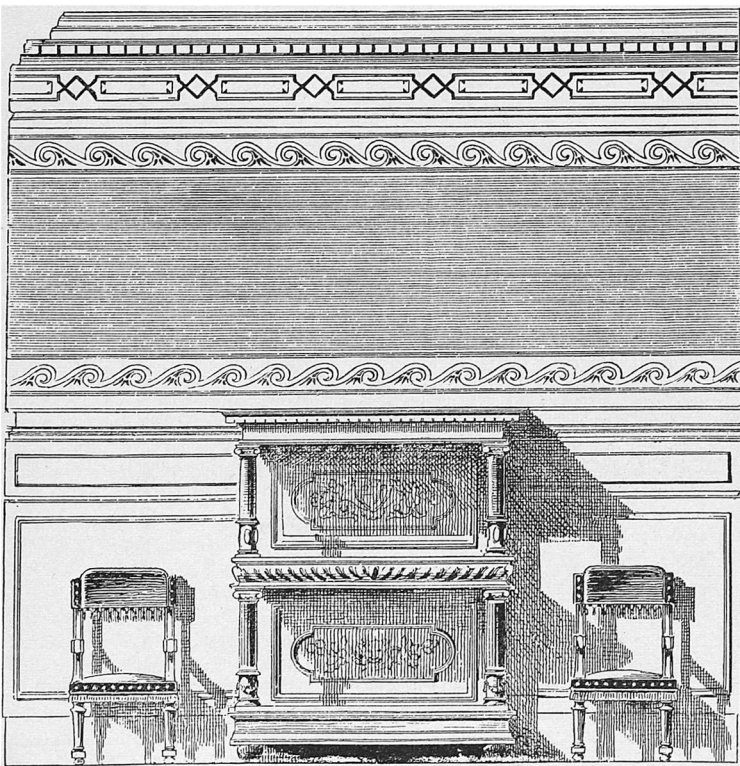
looked for, as a rule, in their disposition of lines. We have nothing to say against the picturesque in architecture when it arises naturally from the circumstances of the case, or in course of time. It may be well worth bearing the discomfort and inconvenience with which they are almost certain to be accompanied, to have a striking sky-line, a fine effect of shadow, or a lot of romantic associations. But some of those things can hardly be had to order, and an attempt to imitate the accidental picturesqueness of old country dwellings is likely to result in anything but the wished-for effect, exteriorly, while in the interior, in addition to the various sorts of discomfort which it entails, it has led to an entire disregard of proportion and of the expressiveness—when properly managed—of architectural lines. The owner of a modern cottage, or even of an expensive residence, is as likely as the occupant of the most ordinary flat or frame house to be troubled about what to do with his ill-proportioned and badly-arranged rooms. Something can generally be done, though in the former case a satisfactory cure is often impossible. Usually, the difficulty is that the room is too high or too low, too long or too narrow, and these faults can easily be remedied, when they are not complicated by irregular jogs and bays, by window and door-casings of unequal height and similar unlooked-for results of the modern architect's plan of working from the outside in. In dealing with these complications their victims must rely on their own ingenuity; but the greater obstacles overcome, it may be found possible to reduce the lesser, or, if not, to bear with them. A few typical examples will help us to understand the principles involved.



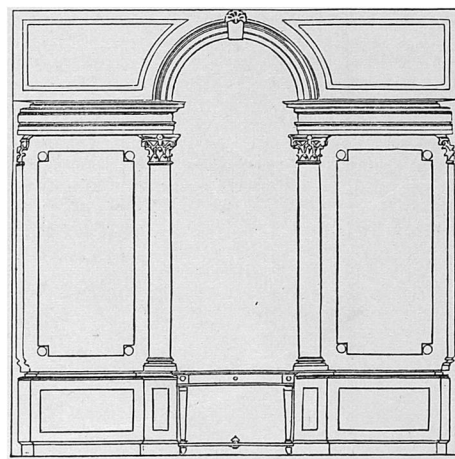
VERTICAL TREATMENT OF LINES TO GIVE APPARENT INCREASE OF HEIGHT TO A ROOM.

Take the case—very common in modern city houses—of a room being too high for its floor-space. The obvious thing to do would be to provide it with both frieze and dado, and to make both of exceptional depth. But perhaps the builder has already put in a dado of the same height as in other low-studded rooms, and the chances are that he has made doors and windows so high that a deep frieze is impossible. He may also have aggravated the difficulty by fixing over the mantel a tall mirror reaching to the

running ornament whose curves approach the horizontal. Sofas and other oblong pieces of furniture may be disposed where they will do the most good, and the current fashion of decorating portières and heavy window-curtains with broad horizontal bands may be followed with advantage. The effect of the tall mantel and mirror may be neutralized in part by treating the frame of the latter differently from the mantel itself, re-gilding it, for example, and by covering the mantel-shelf with a deep lambrequin. The paper should be of a diaper pattern. In the opposite case, all this should be reversed. The figures on the wall-paper should be disposed in ver-



HORIZONTAL TREATMENT OF LINES TO GIVE THE EFFECT OF LOWERING A TOO HIGH CEILING.



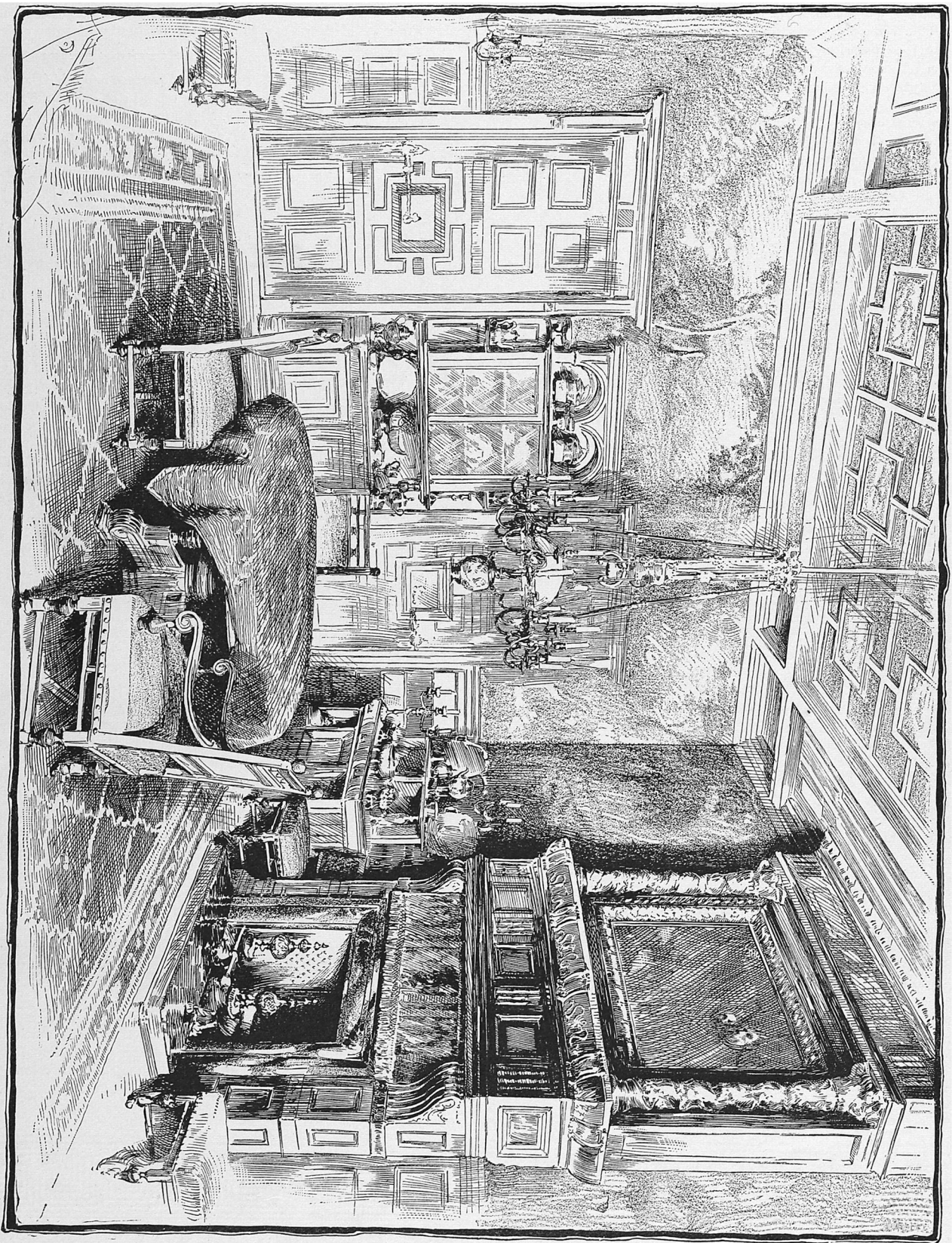
ARCHITECTURAL DIVISION OF WALL SPACE.

intensity, and distributing these in broad masses, trusting to the furniture and movable decorations to give sufficient variety, and, indeed, they usually give too much. But this sensible moderation, this predilection for an harmonious and simple treatment is not to be

cornice; still, there is no need to despair. The principle to act upon remains the same. It is to multiply and accent the horizontal lines, to subdue and efface some of the perpendicular ones. Thus, if the cornice should contain a row of tall palm fronds, in the Empire

tical stripes; the frieze should be omitted or made very narrow; no horizontal bands should be allowed on the curtains, which should hang in straight folds; sofas should give way to chairs, and any panelled article of furniture that may be introduced should be chosen for its height and the height of its panels.

So in the case—of constant recurrence in city houses—of a room being too long for its width, the narrow ends, divided as they always are by windows and window-casings, should have nothing further done to break them up still more. A mirror placed between two windows may tend, by the brightness of its reflections, to unite the



DINING-ROOM IN A NEW YORK HOUSE, WAINSCOTED, AND HUNG WITH TAPESTRY.

two lights and so create an effect of breadth. A picture in the same position would not only be in a very bad light, but would be apt to have the opposite tendency. A marble bust or plaster cast, a piece of light-colored porcelain or shining brass, on the contrary, will be likely to look well. The window-curtains should not be of dark material. When the windows occur on the longer side the matter is much easier to manage. Some attempt is often made by the builder to mitigate the effect of disproportionately long, blank walls, by placing a pair of pilasters and a connecting beam or arch in the centre; or, perhaps, two projecting piers with folding-doors. The fullest advantage should be taken of this artifice. By treating the angles thus produced as veritable corners of the room, placing in them some triangular *étagère*, or cupboard, or seat, or other corner piece, or placing a piano diagonally across one of them, instead of one long room you will have, in appearance, two of reasonable proportions. Where no such piers or pilasters are provided, the largest and most massive pieces of furniture may be made to supply their place.

The two accompanying illustrations* showing the same wall differently treated, explain the principle on which all these suggestions are based; but the much pleasanter appearance of the second should teach us that it is well that vertical lines should dominate. Any too great insistence on the horizontal lines is sure to give an impression of a crushing force overhead. It will sometimes happen that a single bold stroke, the introduction of one conspicuous horizontal, will suffice to correct the bad proportions of a high-ceiled room. But violent contrasts are dangerous; a few objects bounded by graceful curves, or of shapes approaching the square, will be desirable to obviate them.

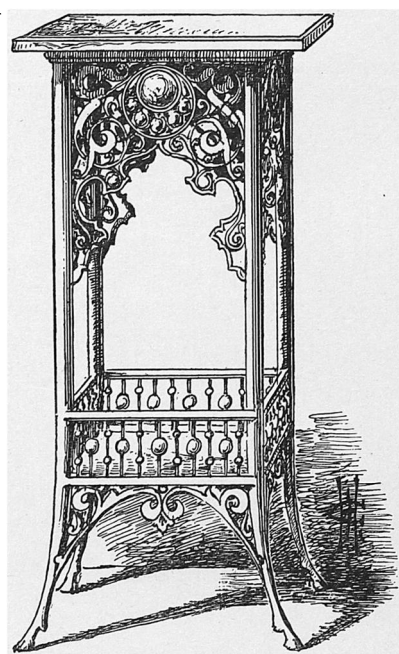
It is not to be supposed that an absolute balance of lines is to be desired or aimed at, for that would be the negation of all character, and would be far from beautiful. A room may approach the cube, have all its sides nearly square, when there is no particular reason for having one side longer than another, as, for example, a vestibule may be so planned. In other rooms, considerations of use and the nature of their furniture would of themselves require that they should be longer in one direction than another. A bedroom, if built square, would be likely to be inconvenient because of the space taken up by the bed. A dining-room must afford a space for the buffet at one end. Even in the vestibule, the doors, with their uprights and panels take off the look of uniformity, and it is generally desirable to treat the other walls so as to destroy the monotonous appearance of a square surface.

Our final illustration shows how this may be done in a house of some pretensions to architectural magnificence. We will only add that the purpose would be served by painted divisions, not imitating the architectural members in the design, but copying their proportions. The fact that an appearance of height may be given by the multiplication of vertical lines was well known to Gothic architects, who took every occasion to act on this principle. Their clustered columns and their perpendicular ribs of stone, carrying up between the windows of the clear-story the lines of the piers below, are familiar to everybody.

In introducing curved lines in the furniture, care should be taken that the horizontal curves be more pronounced than the vertical; otherwise the piece will look

weak and appear to be badly supported. The graceful curves of well-made furniture are an element of beauty in a room, which is not to be despised. But a decided curvature in the legs of a table or pianoforte, of which the superior horizontal line must be absolutely straight, is doubly offensive; while slight curvature in the legs of chairs or sofas, or in the uprights of a cabinet, the top of which may be fashioned into much stronger curves, is strictly allowable.

This leads us to examine the effects of line in the smaller decorations of a room, which, because of their



BRASS STAND FOR BRIC-À-BRAC.

decorative intention are often quite pronounced, and because of their number and variety are apt to be of a sort not so likely to be met with elsewhere. In large pieces of furniture or fixtures which may affect an independent form, such as arched or pedimented doors, we are accustomed to see the upper line, when it is not straight, elevated in the middle. It seems reasonable to follow the analogy of a vaulted or raftered roof in such cases. Such lines in such places add an appearance of stability and of sufficient support. The contrary system would make it appear that the horizontal members were breaking or bending under too much weight. But if copied in the arrangement of objects or of lines of no importance as supports, the result would be more disagreeable than could be accounted for from the mere lack of variety which such a treatment would induce. It has been suggested (and, ridiculous as it may appear at first, the explanation accounts for many things in the history of decoration) that the ill effect of downward-drawn curves and up-pointing angles when unnecessarily multiplied about a room is due to the associations which the like curves and angles bring to mind when they are seen in the human face. In pain and in anger the lines of the face are drawn down at each side, while, when the person is amused or pleased, the corners of the mouth are drawn up and the other lines follow. We are so used to associating pleasant or painful ideas with concave or

convex lines respectively, that even when we meet with them in inanimate objects they still influence our turn of mind. If the small objects on a mantel-shelf are grouped so that the higher ones are in the middle, it will at once make the room look more cheerful to change that disposition and put the tallest objects at or near the ends of the shelf.

These hints may meet with a multitude of applications not here noted, and, while the strictest attention to them may not suffice to convert an ugly room into a pretty one, they can hardly fail to work some improvement.

A NEW YORK STUDIO, into which very few are admitted, is on the top floor of one of the tallest buildings in the city. Itself is roomy enough and imposing enough to serve as a church for a small congregation. The ceiling is vaulted, and rises to some forty feet from the floor. It is colored mainly a dark olive green, and the little one can see of it is through a perfect wilderness of hanging lamps of beaten or graven brass, with nuggets of stained glass of the deepest colors to subdue their lights. The windows are four, placed opposite the cardinal points. They are fan-shaped and filled with stained glass, blue, green and orange, in a pattern remotely suggesting a peacock's tail. The walls of the studio proper are of a deep russet; those of recesses that open out of it cream color. Sofas and lounges placed in the latter are covered with white bear-skins, and the upper part of the largest recess is filled with a construction of carved teak-wood in many tiers, imitating a Burmese pagoda, flourishing with palms and bananas, with strange creepers, orchids and gigantic herbaceous plants, among which peep out a multitude of gilded idols with any number of arms apiece. But the crowning glory of the establishment is a huge chimney rising from the centre of the floor to the roof, and with four capacious fireplaces, each capable of roasting an ox entire, the whole a single piece of cast-iron weighing many tons. The owner of this unique studio is a well-known designer of stained glass and painter of oriental subjects.

ETCHING on ivory, an art formerly much practised to furnish ornamental plaques for furniture and all sorts of objects of daily use, is very simply done. The plate of ivory should be evenly polished, but may have its natural yellowish tone. It is slightly heated, and a light coat of etching varnish, or in default of that, of wax, is spread over it, as in preparing a copper-plate. The design is also produced by the same means as in ordinary etching—that is to say, with the etching needle; but the lines must be bolder and the cross-hatching never closer than in fifteenth-century wood-cuts, which furnish the best copies. The lines are bitten in with sulphuric acid, which must be used in its full strength. When bitten sufficiently, the ivory is first washed in clear water and then the wax or etching ground is removed with spirits of turpentine. The lines can be filled with color; but if a black design is wished, nitrate of silver may be used to bite in the lines instead of the acid; or if a drawing in reddish-brown, nitrate of gold. These substances not only eat into the ivory, but color it at the same time, and they may be applied with a brush, so that very little will be used.

THE brilliancy of vermilion is much enhanced by mixing the pigment with a little alcohol or brandy and the white of egg. If the alcohol is colored with saffron steeped in it, an agreeable tone is imparted.

* Borrowed, with the other illustrations to this article, from M. Harvard's admirable "L'Art dans la Maison," which treats this subject very fully.

